



In Iowa's Interest:

Military Appreciation Month is a Time to Recognize Veterans' Contributions *by Senator Tom Harkin*

May is National Military Appreciation Month—a month dedicated to celebrating and honoring the courageous men and women who have served our country and made incredible sacrifices on our behalf.

As a Navy veteran and proud member of American Legion Post 562 in Cumming, I know firsthand the profound patriotism of America's veterans. It is patriotism not of words, but of deeds and sacrifice. Here in Iowa, veterans come from all walks of life – from farms, small towns, and big cities – but they are united by their shared experience of service to country.

Veterans in our state are also a growing demographic in need of better medical, education, and employment opportunities. Yet those who have put their lives on the line for our freedom often face obstacles to receiving the care they deserve.

Current service members and those who are returning from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq often need specialized assistance to help them acclimate back into Iowa's communities. That's why I'm proud to cosponsor several bills that aim to provide a better support system for our returning veterans. The *Wounded Warrior Research Enhancement Act* and the *Wounded Warrior Workforce Enhancement Act* would create programs to improve the quality of life for returning service members injured in the line of duty. In addition, the *Ruth Moore Act* is a bill that would require the VA to provide better access to mental health care to victims of military sexual trauma.

I have also taken a stand against for-profit colleges and universities that have aggressively recruited veterans, collected their precious GI benefits, and then failed to deliver on the promise of a quality education. My work to uncover this waste, fraud, and abuse played a key role in the Executive Order that President Obama signed one year ago to curb such unscrupulous practices, safeguard veteran education benefits and taxpayers, and ensure that veterans have the information, support, and protections they need to make the decision that is best for them. I have also worked to introduce numerous bills to improve outcomes for veteran students and will continue to support measures that enable veterans to get the very best training and higher education they need to further their career goals.

Honoring our veterans also means ensuring they receive the decorations they have earned. To obtain lost, stolen or never-received medals, follow these directions and send a letter to one of my state offices requesting that you be issued all your decorations. Deceased veterans' family members may also send a letter on behalf of their loved ones.

For more information, please visit <http://www.harkin.senate.gov/>, or follow Senator Harkin on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/tomharkin> and Twitter <https://twitter.com/SenatorHarkin>.